

## **ALTERNATIVE FORM FOR THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE**

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Beloved in the Lord, we are assembled here for the purpose of joining in marriage A.B. and C.D. Let us reverently call to mind what God in His Word teaches concerning the institution, purpose and obligations of the marriage state.

### **The institution of marriage**

Gen. 1 : 26;  
2 : 7 ff  
Eph. 5 : 32  
Matt. 19 : 5  
Gen. 3 : 22; Ex. 20 : 14  
Matt. 5 : 28 ff  
1 Cor. 6 : 10

Marriage was instituted by God. He made man after His own image and likeness and then said: "It is no good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him." God then formed a woman out of the rib of the man and brought her to him in a relationship of marriage and said: "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one." The apostle Paul says that this union of husband and wife in marriage points to a deep secret truth which he understands as applying to the relationship between Christ and His church. In this unity is no place for a third person: neither may it be terminated, because man may not put asunder what God has joined. Although sin also affects this holy bond of marriage the faithful may be sure that the redemption by Jesus Christ cleanses and renews their, marriage also. Therefore married couples who were brought together by God may be sure of His blessing and protection.

### **The purpose of marriage**

Gen. 2 : 24  
Eph. 5 : 31  
1 Cor. 6 : 18 ff;  
1 Pet. 1 : 18 ff  
1 Tim. 4 : 14 ff  
Heb. 13 : 4  
1 Cor. 7 : 35

The purpose of marriage is that husband and wife should belong to each other in a complete fellowship for life. In this they should be united by genuine love, to the honour and glory of God who ordained: "and the two will become one". They should live in holy and honourable marriage and avoid all forms of immorality. They should realize that they were given to each other and have to complement one another. They should accept each other and recognize one another as bearer of the image of God. Husband and wife should in everything loyally help and assist one another and also be of help and a blessing to others. They should with the blessing of God build a home and a family to the honour of His Name. If they receive children from the Lord they should nurture and guide them to know and to serve Him.

### **The mutual responsibilities in marriage**

Gen. 1 : 28  
Eph. 5 : 25  
1 Pet. 3 : 7  
Eph. 5 : 22-24  
Gen. 3 : 16

Husband and wife should honour each other and mutually show the necessary deference, be loyal to one another and resist the temptations threatening marriage. They should not harbour bitterness against one another but be patient and forgiving. Above all they must honestly believe in God and strictly live according to His Word. The husband should love his wife as Christ loves His church. As Christ is Head of the church and gave Himself for it, the husband is head of his wife and should serve, guide and protect her in love. The wife should know that God has joined her to her husband as the church is linked with Christ. As the church loves and follows Christ in obedience the wife should love her husband and follow him in all that is just and fair. Together husband and wife should take good care of their family and nurture them according to the precepts of the covenant in order that they as a family may serve the church and society to the honour of God.

### **Contracting the marriage**

A.B. and C.D. now that you know what the origin, nature, purpose and responsibilities of marriage are according to the Word of God, do you declare that it is your sincere resolve thus to live together in marriage and do you desire now to be united in marriage?  
Both answer: Yes.

### **The minister speaks to the bridegroom**

A.B., do you solemnly declare that within your knowledge there is no lawful objection to your proposed marriage to the bride C.D. at your side, and that you call all people present here to witness that you take C.D. as your lawful wife? Do you also promise never to forsake her, but to guide her in love as a godfearing husband is bound to do his lawful wife, whilst you live with her in a holy manner and in everything remain loyal to her according to the Word of God?  
Answer: Yes.

**The minister speaks to the bride**

C.D., do you solemnly declare that within your knowledge there is no lawful objection to your proposed marriage to the bridegroom A.B., at your side, and that you call all people present here to witness that you take A.B. as your lawful husband? Do you also promise never to forsake him but to love, obey and help him as a godfearing wife is bound to do to her lawful husband, whilst you live with him in a holy manner and in everything remain loyal to him according to the Word of God.

Answer: Yes.

**The minister speaks to the bridal couple**

Exchange the rings and give to each other the right hand. These acts symbolise and seal your being joined together as husband and wife. I now pronounce you A.B. and C.D. husband and wife legally married in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, according to the laws for the state and the ordinances of the church. Know that God has joined you together and accept in faith what God brings on your way as married people; expect His blessing in everything.

**Prayer:** (Preferably the bridal couple kneels)

Almighty God, we pray that You will sanctify the bond uniting this couple. Grant that through the power of the Holy Spirit they shall live in true faith and pure love and overcome all temptations. In prosperity and in adversity; in joy and in sadness, guide them by Your hand - faithful and fatherly. Graciously bless them in everything. Grant that this marriage shall contribute to the building up of Your church, to the spreading of Your Holy Gospel, and to the glory of Your Name. Amen.